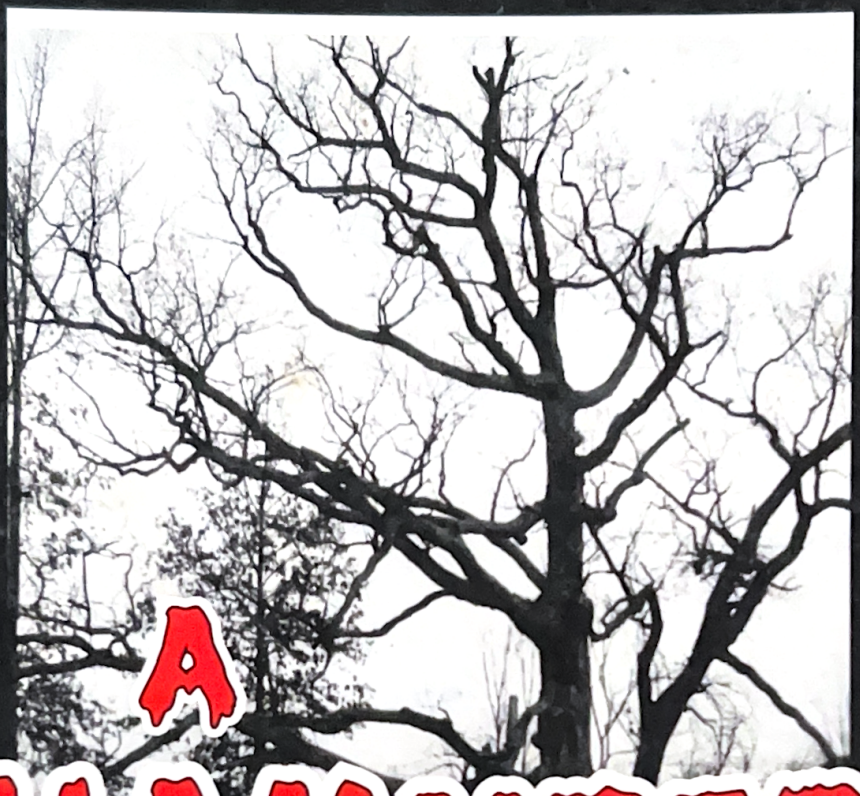

A HAUNTED HISTORY

OF CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO

Richard Crawford

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OF
CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO

BY RICHARD CRAWFORD

Dedication

I can not thank the good Lord enough for blessing me with the most positively loving and influential people in my life, my dad and mom, Theodore Leonard and Catherine Crawford.

Dad, born Nov. 22, 1903, in Asheville, N. C., (died Amelia, Ohio, July 28, 1979), and mom, born Mar. 9, 1917, in Irvine, Ky., (died Amelia, Ohio, Good Friday, Apr. 1, 1994) were also the most forgiving, understanding, and sacrificing human beings I have ever known. I wish I was sure of going to heaven because I am anxious to reunite with them.

"A Haunted History of Clermont County, Ohio," is lovingly and respectfully dedicated to the parents of the author, Theodore L. and Catherine Crawford.

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Appreciation

There are so many people I appreciate greatly for their continued friendship and for their help and support in researching, writing, and publishing this book. There are so many that certainly some will unintentionally overlooked.

Paul, Tracy, Cody, and Samantha Dunaway; Todd and Michelle Jackson; Andy and Rachelle Dickerson and family; Brett and Beth Frederick and family; Dave and Kim Frysinger and family; Terry and Paige McElfresh and family; Eddie and Angie McMahan and family; Jay Stevens and family; Mike Burton; Larry Colonel and Toni; Chuck Kilgore; Bill Peters; Chris Decker; John and Clara Dotson and family; Julie and Bob Wagner and family; June Bleakley; Cyd Abner; Dwayne Behymer, Tate, and family; Bob and Sharon Brumagem and family; Todd and Carol Miller and family; Jerry Bosken and family; Garrett Wood; Carol Buhler-Hargis; Marilyn McConahay; Karen and Teri Bradburn; Carol Emery and Troy and Terri Hopkins; Mike and Sandy Thompson and family; Dan and Valerie Mallaley and family; Rob and Dawn Carmosino and family; Bill Deavers and family; Bill and Jennifer Hadley and family; the Garner family; the Haumesser family; the Jett family; Toby Lewin and family; Debbie Chin and family; Mike and Sharon Rapp and family; Scott Reese and family; Danny Woodley and family; Dale Reynolds; Mark and Sharmin Jaehnen; Ryan Gladwell; Eddie Fox; Steve Weber; Andrew and Trish Vance; Keith Whitson and family; Mike McMullen; Lynn Maloney; Jason Barkhurst; Shirley Shipley; Billie Kramer and family; Pam Troxell; Ken and Amelia Kincaid; Donnie Lawrence and family; the Amelia High School Class of 1968; Grassy Run Historical Society; and the staff of "The Clermont Sun," Ohio's oldest continuously operating weekly newspaper.

Also, the late Dave Angel, Scott Dotson, Eric Luse, and Mike Williams.

Thank you, I think, to The "Queen of Scream" Chris Woodyard for talking me into writing my first book on Clermont County, Ohio, hauntings "Uneasy Spirits." What a talented writer is this author of "The Haunted Ohio" series who bedeviled me into that original ghost writing project.

I could never forget the family members with whom I still maintain contact - Cathleen Rose, Eric, Scott, Matt, Shannon, Eric Jr., Aaron, and Elizabeth Catherine Johnston; Larry and Andrea Goodwin; and Patty Crawford and family, Jerry Crawford and family, and John and Diane Crawford Jones and family.

Members of my family have been supportive of my work on "A Haunted History of Clermont County, Ohio." From left, in front, Eric Jr., Elizabeth Catherine, Aaron, and Cathleen Rose Crawford Johnston. In back, Scott, Eric, Shannon, and Matt Johnston.

Author Richard Crawford of Amelia (second, left) and his three closest friends of many years, from left, Paul Dunaway of Goshen, Andy Dickerson of Milford, and Todd Jackson of Bethel. The trio have been the most supportive people in everything including researching for "A Haunted History of Clermont County, Ohio."

Introduction

Uneasy Spirits is a book I absolutely did not want to research and write! The topic of the unusual or abnormal was unsettling, but as I finally got myself motivated to do this project I began to have a lot of fun.

Every person I interviewed for this book has made just about the same statement before they told me of their experiences - "I DON'T WANT ANYBODY TO THINK I'M CRAZY!"

Let me reassure all of you readers that these people aren't crazy. Every one of these people I have spoken with, I discovered were courteous, friendly, and very serious about their experiences. Less than 20 years ago I probably could have talked no one into making a public statement about the topic. Attitudes have changed among the general public. Instead of being a topic ignored because of its unusualness, it is now seen as exciting and fun. The topic of haunting is rather normal when you consider some of today's topics such as psychic connections and Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) sightings, contacts, and abductions.

No one is asked to believe any of these stories. This book was written to inform readers of the incredibly interesting and fascinating history of one of the most significant homes in the world, Clermont County. Yet, it has been extremely fun to have explored and continue to explore what some would describe as the dark side of our beloved county's history.

Please have fun with this book. Believe what you will. Let me reassure you it was a great deal of fun researching and writing this book and I am honored to have begun or renewed friendships with all the people I was fortunate to have interviewed. They were all intelligent, honest, interesting people. My sincerest "Thank you" to all of them.

The reason for the mention of the locations of these sites is for historical fact, only. Please be respectful of each site. Some are sacred sites and others are privately owned homes or buildings.

Thank you.

AMELIA

In The Mists Of The Night Roams The Lady In White

Charles Robinson and his family were originally from Maryland and moved to Kentucky. Robinson was a friend of Ezekiel Dimmitt who had moved, during the autumn of 1797, to what would become Batavia during the autumn of 1797. He reported back to his friends and family in Kentucky how pleased he was with the locale.

The Robinson family arrived at the Dimmitts' cabin on July 6, 1806, and immediately a log cabin was built for them near the Dimmitts' cabin. That site is today occupied by the Batavia Branch of the United States Postal Service (575 West Main Street).

In the spring of 1807, the Robinsons moved along the north bank of a creek that soon after was named Lucy's Run after a member of the Robinson family. The Robinsons built a log cabin on the site of the present Batavia Township Cemetery on Lucy Run Cemetery Road. By 1808 the Robinson home became known as the Robinson Meeting House and it existed as such for about seven or eight years. This was the beginning of the present Amelia United Methodist Church. Lucy Run Road would later become a stage coach route (the route stretched from the intersection of Lucy Run and Amelia-Olive Branch roads, through the intersection of Lucy Run and Apple roads, and through Lucy Run Cemetery Road).

The legend of The Lady in White begins with one of the Robinson girls, Lucy. Lucy is most often mentioned as a cousin of the Charles Robinson family and it is believed she lived in Union Township, quite possibly in the area of the present village of Withamsville. Charles and Asseneth Robinson had five daughters of their own - Mary, Nancy, Margaret, Elizabeth, and Catherine. Some believe The Lady in White may actually be one of them. Regardless of who the young

lady was, she was in love with a young man who had arrived early one evening to announce that he had fallen in love with another young woman and that he would not be visiting the Robinsons again.

While the two young people were talking, the sky had suddenly blackened and soon a steady shower poured down on the couple. They soon ended their conversation and the young man mounted his horse and began to slip and slide on the muddy road as he rode away. By now the shower had become a cloudburst.

Miss Robinson was not quite prepared to end the conversation or see her sweetheart ride away. She went to the family stable and mounted a horse (another version said she attached the horse to a carriage and drove it). In the desperation to catch up with her sweetheart she did not notice the water of what was to become known as Lucy's Run had already overflowed its banks and was rising over the road. The horse slipped in the mud and the young woman was tossed into the swiftly rising waters of a flash flood. Stunned from the fall and seriously injured, she could not pick herself up and soon drowned in the high, raging waters.

For more than 150 years a figure in white, who is assumed to be one of the Robinson girls, has been seen crossing the road or standing next to the road where it is believed her body was eventually found, next to the cemetery where she was laid to rest. On bright, moon lit nights, it is reported she can be seen with a flowing white veil covering her face and neck and a long white dress that seems to float behind her as she moves along Lucy Run Cemetery Road.

Perhaps one night as you round the old loop near the cemetery, you may see emerging from behind a gravestone, the image of young Miss Robinson moving forward to finally reunite with her sweetheart.

Incident(s) since the first printing:

The author was being interviewed during a filming for South West Ohio Magazine, a Clermont County cable access television program. To film a one-half hour show, it takes about two hours. It was almost totally dark standing in the cemetery except for the lights operated by the camera crew. Approximately 20 people were on hand, mostly other witnesses of strange occurrences in the cemetery who had already been interviewed, and invited guests. While the camera was

filming the author being interviewed by Jan Lombardo and Greg Curless, a figure in white moved behind the trio from right to left and the viewer can see right through the figure that appears almost to be floating. It was passing, not quickly, about 20 feet behind the trio. After checking the tape numerous times, the figure could not be discounted as anything other than unexplained. None of the onlookers had seen anything.

Other stories have been told of quickly appearing dense fog only on the site of the cemetery and the section of road passing next to it.

The Robinson family burial plot in the Lucy Run Cemetery near Amelia.

BATAVIA

Elderly Couple Seeking Companionship At The Hoberg House

This beautiful old wooden frame house on Broadway Street in Batavia is the home in which Herb and Rosanne Hoberg moved into in 1946. The Hobergs were only the third family to live in the house that was built immediately after the Civil War (1865).

The Hobergs bought the house from a Mrs. Lytle. Her brother, Henry Hodges, lived in Promont, now the museum of the Milford Area Historical Society. Mrs. Lytle later sold the Hobergs (for $25) a beautiful antique bed that had just been removed from Promont. It was at this point that Mrs. Hoberg believes the unusual occurrences began.

"We had a cocker spaniel and there were times we'd be in the family room and we'd hear footsteps coming down the stairway. The cocker's hair would stand straight up," Mrs. Hoberg said. "It happened a number of times and (the sounds) always came out of the room with the bed (from Promont) in it. . .

"I was home alone one night (in the early 1970s) when I heard the door to that room open and then I heard the footsteps coming down the stairs. I went out in the car and stayed until my family came home.

"One Christmas season my mother heard the footsteps and called the police. They went up into that room and the bed looked as if someone had been sitting on it.

"I think it was in 1968 we had an Open House. A man wanted to use the bathroom and the one on the first floor was occupied and I told him he could use the bathroom on the second floor at the end of the hall. When he came back down he asked his wife if my parents lived here because he saw an old couple sitting in rocking chairs in

the room upstairs. He said the woman was knitting and the man was reading the paper. He said both were well-dressed in old clothes. He nodded at them and smiled and they did the same. . . but my parents weren't there at the time and there was no old couple in the house that I knew of.

"We moved out of the house in 1972. Kids in later families who moved into the house saw this same old man looking out a window of the house. The kids were in school and could see the old man looking across the street; they thought straight at them. The children were so sure they saw someone in their home that they would be excused from class to see if someone had broken into their home. They never found anyone in the house."

The bed in question was removed from the house before the Hobergs moved to another house in Batavia. The bed is now dismantled and in storage in a barn in town.

Owners since the Hobergs have moved have reported unexplained scratchings on the wall, doors that won't stayed closed, mysterious footprints, and blasts of arctic air through the house on humid days.

Mrs. Hoberg said one of the families even went to the extent to have the house blessed by a priest, but she scoffs at most of these things.

The current owners have facetiously named the ghosts whom they claim to have never experienced. Except . . . the electric vacuum cleaner has been known to have turned itself on and off on occasions and fresh coffee has been smelled, but the coffee maker was unplugged and had been unused.

Some evening if you're driving by the house and see a well-dressed old man or old woman looking out a window of the old house, just smile and nod, they're just keeping an eye on their neighbors and the possible unwelcome visitors at their respective homes.

BELFAST

The Ghostly Goings On Are Ongoing At The Kramer House

This beautiful, large mansion doesn't appear as if it could be housing a spectre that has been witnessed walking through fences or walls, but the Kramer House has been the site of many strange occurrences.

Howard and Billie Kramer live in a beautiful mansion on Goshen Rd., in the little village of Belfast. The Kramers have lived here since 1962. They purchased the house from the Sutton family who had lived here since their ancestors had built the house in 1829. Originally, the farm included 880 acres and now comprises a still sizeable 75 acres.

Surprisingly, Lida Beth Sutton, who lived in the house for many years, never said anything to the Kramers about any mysterious happenings on the property. Mrs. Sutton moved to the house next door on the south side and lived there until she died in the winter of 1997, less than one year from her 100th birthday.

"The day after we moved in, the doors would open with no one in the rooms," said Mrs. Kramer. "At times, we have seen a man in the house and he just disappears. He's always dressed Victorian style."

"One day I was standing outside the side of the house here with three of my friends, talking," said Mr. Kramer. "We all noticed this man out in the field walking along the fence line and approaching the house. As he kept walking toward the fence gate in our direction we expected him to stop. None of us recognized him so we just naturally expected him to stop at the fence and identify himself. All four of us saw him just walk right through the fence like it wasn't there. The four of us just kind of looked at each other and asked the others if we had all seen the same thing. We had."

Mrs. Kramer remembers this incident very well. "My husband

came into the house where the men's wives and myself were. He asked where the man was who had walked through the fence and into the house. We all answered that none of us had seen any man come into the house."

Let me clarify that the Kramers are a religious, well-educated couple. I personally met one of their children whom I covered in high school sports and he was polite, friendly, and well-adjusted.

Mrs. Kramer recalls when a neighbor, who had a high opinion of himself, visited one morning. "We were in the kitchen talking when he asked me who the man was in the house. I told him we were alone. He insisted there was a man in the house in the doorway of the living room which was behind me. I turned quickly, we went into the room, and there was no one there. This particular neighbor never returned.

"We'd hear sounds of people walking upstairs when we knew no one was up there and we'd tell guests it was the sound of the house settling," she laughed. "My son saw a man walking in the snow in the field and followed him a long while on his horse. The next morning all we saw were the horse's prints. . . We've had visitors describe the man as wearing dark pants and a white shirt with large sleeves and he had porkchop side burns and a medium length hair cut. . . We've had psychics visit and they all felt the presence was in the room we used for the nursery on the second floor (now being used as a walk-in closet, across the hall from the master bedroom). The room would be ice cold, but the babies would still be warm."

The Kramers do not know who this man is who can literally walk throughout the house like a mist. But they don't mind him. They actually seem amused by this spectre that they say is not the least bit threatening.

An uninvited visitor; welcome, but nevertheless, uninvited.

Incident(s) since the first printing:

A Dayton, Ohio, television station spent several days filming at the Kramer House with several skeptics among the TV crew. The skeptics did not return after the first night of filming. One of the evenings involved the filming of a seance. During the seance, Mrs. Kramer learned why she was so familiar with the house the minute she had

stepped into it. She was told she had lived there before in the 1820s or 1830s as a young woman who fell in love with a handsome young neighbor. The young man and the young girl's father argued one evening and one of them, it is not known who, shot a pistol and killed the other. This explains the blood stain on the parlor's wooden floor. The female psychic leading the seance believes the person shot and killed is who haunts the house. This young man is seen or experienced frequently. Many times on rainy nights in April he is seen walking by the windows on the north side of the house.

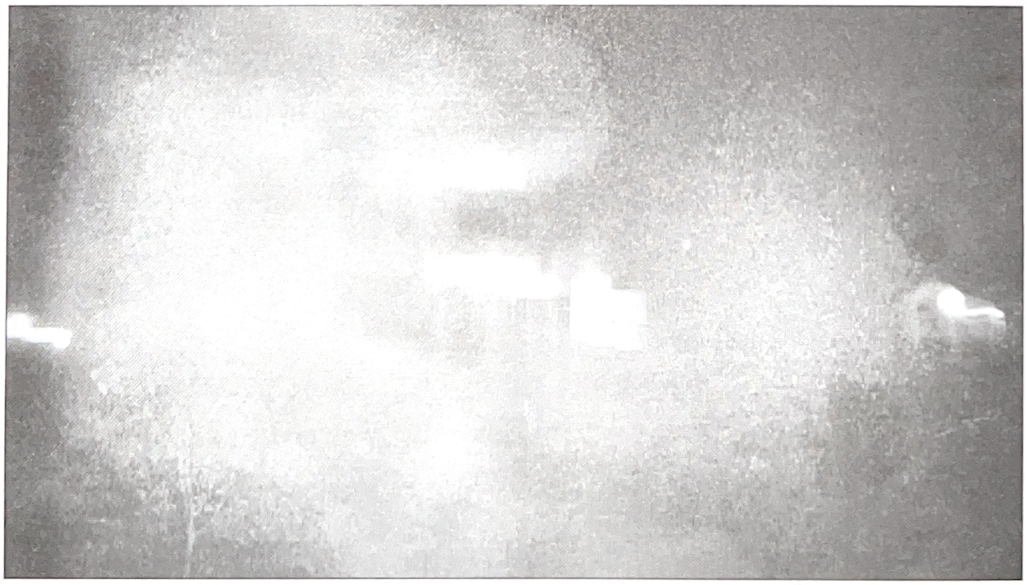
One night, the author was invited for dinner and while all there were eating, a very loud banging, possibly caused by a clinched fist, took place on the front door. All got up from the table immediately and ran the 30-foot distance to the front door on which the pounding occurred and no one could be seen.

The night of Oct. 30, 2002, the Kramers invited the author and other friends to their home for a vigil/party. Numerous walks around and through the house took place with all persons accounted for and each time something had been moved inside or outside of the house. Six-year old Cody Dunaway, and his parents, Paul and Tracy, visited the Kramers shortly after dark, and the author and Shirley Shipley saw Cody petting and playing with a dog in the yard. When the Dunaways were preparing to leave Cody pointed to a photograph magneted onto the Kramers' refrigerator and very politely thanked Mrs. Kramer for letting him pet her dog. When the Dunaways pulled out of the long driveway, Mrs. Kramer commented it was impossible that Cody could have petted that dog and Shirley and the author vouched for the young gentleman. Mrs. Kramer was stunned. She explained that that dog had been dead for nine years!

Also that night, people accused each other of pulling each other's arm, leg, or hair. While everyone was in the living room, Mrs. Kramer was pulled by the hair so hard she almost somersaulted backwards from her seated position on the couch. The author and Tim Lindsley both witnessed this. Within an hour, the clock struck midnight All Hallow's Eve (October 31). Edward Fox, one of Clermont County's most noted clairvoyants, was encouraged by most of those present to lead a seance. At midnight, just as he was beginning, every

fuse in the house lost its power!

Clermont County Historian and author of "A Haunted History of Clermont County, Ohio," leads a tour of the Kramer House. Notice the large orb by the lighted lamp.



An unexplained mist on a non-foggy night at the Kramer House, regarded by author and historian Richard Crawford as one of the three most haunted houses in Clermont County.

BETHEL

Is Accused Witch Seeking Revenge In Bethel?

I don't know how many times I've said this, but there are so many extremely interesting facts in Clermont County history. . . "It could only happen here."

The only witchcraft trial known to have been recorded in the history of the state of Ohio occurred in Bethel in 1805.

Mrs. Nancy Evans was an elderly lady who, unfortunately, lived near to the Hildebrand family. This family included two teenage girls who had active minds and sought recognition from their peers and the entire community.

In 1805, Bethel was a village of a few hundred people, most of whom were very religious. When Obediah Denham became the first settler in 1798. He set aside land specifically for religious purposes. Denham, originally from Plainfield, New Jersey, arrived here from Kentucky, a state he left because he abhorred slavery. He forbade slave owners and pro-slavery sympathizers from settling within the village limits.

Mrs. Evans lived on the southeast corner of the intersection of Plane Street (State Route 125) and State Route 232. All she owned was her little log cabin, the garden to which she gave very precious care, and a pet, a black cat.

The Hildebrand sisters accused Mrs. Evans of talking to her black cat while she was in the cabin, alone. The girls claimed a black cat was a familiar with the devil; a familiar being an intimate servant of satan.

The girls would become hysterical as night approached. It was after nightfall they claimed to see hideous objects in the air. Devices were made to catch a witch, including a large bag of linsey-woolsey. The

bag was held by a family member while some ceremony was performed forcing the witch to seek refuge in the bag. When the witch entered the bag it was quickly closed and tied shut and laid on the porch of the Hildebrand house where it was cut into many pieces with a sharp axe. The fragments were collected and burned which was supposed to kill the witch. All of this effort proved to be unsuccessful. The girls continued to have their bouts of hysteria. Subsequently, the village justice of the peace (Houton Clark) was forced to take action.

It is believed the first account of this witchcraft trail took place in the 1888 edition of "Historical Collections of Ohio," by Henry Howe. Under the title, "A Witch Story," Howe wrote, ". . . Although statutes of Ohio made no provision for cases of this kind, (the Hildebrands) persuaded a justice of the peace to take the matter in hand. A tradition prevailed that if a witch was weighed against the Bible she could not tip the Bible because of its overpowering influence over evil. A rude scale was made and set-up in a pond, and in the presence of the neighbors, with the Bible at one end and Nancy Evans at the other, she was thus adjured, 'Nancy Evans, thou art weighed against the Bible to try thee against all witchcraftry and diabolical practices.' This being done in the name of the law, and with a profound respect for the world of God, it had a solemn and conclusive effect. Nancy was, of course, too heavy for the Bible. She willingly submitted to the odd process to bring peace of mind to her ignorant, deluded neighbors, whom she pitied."

The pond, in which Mrs. Evans was tried, is believed to have been in the rear of her home where lowered ground can still be seen just directly south of the site of the Evans' cabin.

It is amazing anyone could possibly believe Mrs. Evans did not outweigh the Bible and would of course win out.

As in most of these kinds of stories, legends persist. One states that Mrs. Evans later sued the Hildebrands and won "twenty-one dollars and two-thirds" for damages in Clermont County Court in the then county seat of Williamsburg.

Mrs. Evans is believed to have finally moved to the present Hamersville area and died not long after the trial. She continued to maintain the respect of her neighbors and all who knew her. The

Hildebrands, so the story goes, were literally ridden out of Bethel on a rail whereupon they moved to Williamsburg.

Incident(s) since the first printing:

The author has spoken to several employees of the Speedway Gas Station that was built on the site of some of the garden owned by Mrs. Evans. There are several who claim that when working on third shift they have experienced some odd occurrences. One young man was working the two summers before and after his senior year at Bethel-Tate High School to earn money for college. He told of instances when he was be pushed into the glass doors of the freezers and on one occasion was grabbed by the collar of his shirt and yanked hard backwards onto the floor. Items are unexplainably thrown on the floor or tossed from aisle to aisle when no one was in the building, but the employee(s). Other third shift employees have told of similar incidents, and because they liked their place of employment, they did not want to leave and so did not speak up about occurrences they had witnessed. They have pleaded to be placed on other shifts.

On a June 2005 "Tour of Historical, Haunted Clermont County," one of the tourists had breathing problems and began choking on the site of Mrs. Evans' cabin. This was the first time the author had actually witnessed this, but he had been told this had happened to others through the years.

BLOWVILLE

The East Fork's Big Snake Has Yet To Be Uncovered

The little village of Blowville no longer exists, but when an enormous snake was reported creeping through the surrounding countryside and bodies of water, the village existed around the present intersection of Jackson Pike and State Route 133.

For years, stories appeared in area newspapers about large snakes scaring and actually attacking Clermont countians.

Some of the stories included the snake of Ricetown (present area of State Route 232, just south of the intersection with Bethel-New Richmond Road). The "Clermont Courier" of Aug. 13, 1890, reported that a farmer "whose veracity was never doubted" beheld "a snake fully 20-feet long and six-inches in diameter." He ran to get some friends to give chase and they did not find the snake, but "there was a small track in the weeds that looked like a small tree had been dragged along and the track disappeared as if by magic and thus ended the snake hunt."

"The Clermont Sun" of May 16, 1900, reported a big snake seen in the Franklin neighborhood (the village stood along Franklin-Laurel Road near its intersection with Bethel-New Richmond Road). The article stated, "a monster snake, of the black species, made a vicious attack upon the well-known farmer W. R. Clark. Mr. Clark says he was working in a potato patch. . . when he saw the huge reptile going around him in a circle. . . hastily he raised his hoe and dealt the snake a most powerful blow, but the hoe bounced back as though he had struck the tire of a 20th-century automobile. Thereupon the snake placed himself in such a position that he looked like a huge cable and then ran his head about three feet up in the air. Mr. Clark. . . again drawing back his hoe brought it forward with all his might and caught

the snake just below the head as he was springing for Mr. Clark." The snake got away and a neighborhood search failed to produce the snake. Clark said the snake was "about 12-feet long and about three-inches in diameter."

The "Toledo Daily News" in June 1900 contained an article that proclaimed "Clermont County. . . should have a world-wide reputation for its big snakes. . . where there is an unusual amount of smoke there must be some fire - where the big snake stories break out at regular or irregular intervals there must be some sort of snake for a foundation on which to build."

The biggest snake ever reported in the county was seen in 1849 in the area of Blowville in Jackson Township.

An article appeared in the Aug. 6, 1849, issue of "The Clermont Courier" headlined "The Big Snake - Again." "The Courier" explained that John Waits, who reported seeing the snake is "a man of respectability."

Waits' affidavit filed in the Clermont County courthouse stated, "On the first day of August, 1849, between 1 and 2 o'clock P. M. I was walking down the bank of the race of Hartman's mill, on the East Fork of the Little Miami, in said county. The creek was full, and the water muddy, and as I am informed by the miller, was between five and six feet in depth at the point where I was. My attention was suddenly attracted by the appearance of some unusual object in the water distant about 80 to 100 yards from me, in the mill-race, and rapidly approaching me. At first I thought it was a wild duck, but in a very short time, as it approached with great rapidity, it came on until it was directly opposite to where I was, when it suddenly dashed its head beneath the surface and disappeared. I will state I had no idea of its being the big snake, so long said to be an occupant of the mill-dam as I had always been up to that time an unbeliever in those reports. But now I am as firmly convinced, as I am of my own existence, that some strange and monstrous animal is there, such as I have never seen or heard of before. . . it was, to the best of my belief, from 30 to 35 feet in length. I judge this from the fact that when it went down and under the water, its head was exactly opposite to me, and at that moment of time its tail was directly opposite a sycamore bush grow-

ing on the bank of the race, and the distance between the two points is I believe about the distance stated. Its body appeared to be about as thick as that of a man, its color was dark brown or black, except a grayish color under the throat and some white like circles around the eyes. I could not see whether there were any scales on its body or not, nor could I distinguish anything like fins or flippers.

"The motion in the water was not like that of a snake; the undulations were not up and down, but horizontal. It's head did not at all resemble that of a snake or alligator, or of any other animal I ever saw. In shape, without reference to the hair or color, it appeared nearer to that of a prairie wolf than anything else I can name. There was no appearance of hair on it or its body. Its head was short and thick, unlike that of any snake I ever saw. Its eye was certainly larger than that of a horse, it appeared to me to be about as large as the mouth of a teacup, but the white around the eye may have deceived me, and induced me to think it was larger than it was."

A meeting took place August 20 at Williamsburg to adopt measures for the capture of the "monster." Charles Boerstler "Boss" Huber acted as the chairman of the committee and Dr. M. Smith was selected as secretary. Isaac Hartman, who owned the mill pond and the adjoining land, and John Bools, who owned the lands on the opposite side of the East Fork, agreed to having the pond drained, but Hartman objected to having his dam torn down in order to drain the pond. A total of $25 was given to Hartman to rebuild his dam.

The hunt for the Big Snake took place August 28. The "Courier" of August 30 reported, "The draining of the pond commenced yesterday, will probably take a day or two, and when that is accomplished, why, if the snake is there, perhaps he may manifest himself - perhaps not. For our own part we think it doubtful - not that we deny the existence of the veritable monster himself, for we do not choose do do so, in the face of so many reputable men who aver that they have seen him; but we do incline to the belief that he is not going to show himself when there is a crowd about, or when he may run the least risk of being captured.

"The number of people on the ground daily is said to be four or five hundred. They have a good time of it, judging from what we hear

- some drinking, some fighting, and all amusing themselves in one way or another.

"If the varmint should be taken before our next publication day, we shall announce the fact in an extra."

Finally, "The Courier" of September 6 reported that the search continued until September 1 "without a sign of the monster being discovered."

This was the second and best-reported sighting of The Big Snake. The first affidavit had been filed earlier in 1849 by John Scerbe, another man said to be honest.

Sharon Brumagem, a noted Clermont County writer/historian, brought back to memory the Big Snake Scare of 1849 in one of her newspaper columns in the early 1980s. "I was intrigued by the whole story, especially how enterprising people were 150 years ago," she said.

Even though the Big Snake was not found when the mill pond was drained, a deep hole was discovered near the center of the pond's bed. Inside the hole a ledge of rock was found. Could the snake have been hiding under the rock? Just because you can't find something doesn't mean it isn't there.

Perhaps some night you might be traveling along State Route 133 and nearing Jackson Pike. You may see an undulating creature cross the road in front of you. Beware! It may be a descendant of the Big Snake searching for its long-lost home.

Incident(s) since the first printing:

In her incredibly interesting book "Haunted Ohio II," author/historian Chris Woodyard wrote of a creature known as "The Crosswick Monster." It was seen in the Little Miami River. The site of the sightings was the village of Crosswick in Warren County. The monster was described as "reptilian, 30 to 40 feet long and about 16 inches in diameter, scaled . . . body; the head, about the same thickness as the body." When the monster was finally chased by about 60 men, most of them fled before the few remaining pursuers saw the creature disappear into a hole near the river. No one followed the monster into the hole and it was never seen there again. . . then comes the Big Snake Scare of Blowville and Jackson Township!

FELICITY

Why Is A Gravestone Glowing In Smyrna Cemetery?

Clermont County, before the legal immigration of United States citizens after August 3, 1795, was a favorite area for Native American seasonal hunting and fishing encampments.

There never were many permanent Native American villages in the county because of the area's humidity and swampiness. Also, basically beginning in the 1780s, white settlers were taking over the red man's hunting grounds of present Kentucky and as the white man began to settle along the south bank of the Ohio River, confrontations became more frequent. The Native Americans wanted to maintain the Ohio River as the permanent border between themselves and the white settlers, but they felt more secure moving further north into what is now the state of Ohio.

One village that was within the present border of Clermont County was located on the site of the present Smyrna Cemetery located on Smyrna Road about one-half mile east of the village of Felicity. In 1808 a log cabin was built on the site of the Shawnee village for a Presbyterian Church and soon after a cemetery was established. It is unknown why they were called Smyrna. The second pastor to serve there was the renowned abolitionist John Rankin.

There are a couple of stories about the Shawnee Indians who lived there. The best-known story tells of Sweet Lips, the leader of this village. She was also believed to have been the village's medicine and religious leader.

On Christmas Eve night 1787, Sweet Lips led an attack on a party of surveyors led by John O'Bannon. The surveyors were camped on the site of the present Felicity-Franklin High School building on Market Street. A fight ensued and there were some casualties, but no

known deaths on either side. The Shawnee did take one prisoner, Peter Hastings.

Hastings was brought back to the Shawnee camp and his entire body was painted black to show he was marked for death, a slow death by burning at the stake. Fortunately for Hastings, Sweet Lips saw something about the man in which was very interested. She persuaded her people to at least temporarily spare him. During the time that Hastings was Sweet Lips' prisoner, he managed to talk her into allowing him to escape. In exchange, he promised to return when the times were better after Sweet Lips told him she feared he would eventually be executed. She promised to give him some land if he would return someday.

Hastings did return in the late summer of 1795, shortly after the Indian nations of Ohio signed the Treaty of Greenville that forced them to surrender the southern two-thirds of the present state of Ohio to the United States government. Upon his return, Hastings asked Sweet Lips for the land she had agreed to give him. Her people were already in an extremely foul mood after being forced to leave their beloved land. Upon discovering Sweet Lips had secretly agreed to give some of their land, eight years ago, to this white man, they became even angrier.

Before removing to the north of the Greeneville Treaty Line, they held a council and decided to execute Sweet Lips.

There are two stories of how she was executed. One story says she dug her own grave and kneeled over it to pray upon which she was tomahawked in the back of her head and thereupon she fell into the grave she had had to dig for herself. The other story says she was burned at the stake, herself, and then buried.

Whichever, there are numerous stories of what appears to be an Indian woman roaming through the Smyrna Cemetery at night. It is said because of her night time sightings, the church moved to within the village of Felicity because most people did not want to be there at night. She is believed to be searching for her people. She is reported having been seen on foggy, moonlit nights bent over with grief and possibly hoping to make amends with her people, people who left her behind more than 200 years ago.

The story most told is of a glowing gravestone in the cemetery that is said to be the spot where Sweet Lips is buried right where she was executed. It is supposed to be most easily seen on the darkest of nights.

Incident(s) since the first printing:

For several years this writer drove down the long dead end road just to see if he could see the glowing gravestone. Not once. Then, in 2000, he was driving down the very narrow path-like street with some people he was taking on a tour of historical haunted locations in Clermont County. After turning around and heading toward the intersection of Smyrna Road and Felicity-Higginsport Road, the person in the passenger seat suddenly yelled, almost hysterically. The author, who was driving, slammed on the brakes in fear of striking a deer crossing the road. Not so. He turned to his left and for the first time he saw the glowing gravestone. Since then, he has seen it many times, always on a cloudy, rainy, or moonless night. The gravestone and surrounding gravestones have been investigated and tested by geologists in the past five years and there was no reason discovered why the single gravestone glows with some brightness on the darkest of nights.

The Smyrna Cemetery, near Felicity, where a bright gravestone can be viewed on the darkest of nights where it is believed Sweet Lips is buried. She was the leader of the Shawnee village that once stood on this site.

GOSHEN

A Mother Mourns In The Elvis Presley House

The house on Shiloh Road was built in either 1863 or 1867. A typical farm family lived there - hard-working, honest, and close-knit.

On a rare day when the family took the time to relax and play, one of the children fell into one of the narrow and deep wells on the farm. The child could not be saved and it died. The body could not be recovered and buried properly because the well was too narrow and deep. The family decided to fill in the well as a grave for the child. The family's grief was intense and seeing the site of the tragedy every day deepened the grief and the family finally decided to move.

New families took over the farm and the story of the well-grave was eventually forgotten. It is believed that one of the additions to the house covered the well-grave.

The Reed family lived here from 1961-63. Nancy Reed, now a resident of the Clermont County village of Williams Corner and a member of numerous county historical societies, recalls her years living in the house.

"It was a creaky old house with noises, but it was a friendly atmosphere. I didn't feel threatened. My husband Jim worked at night. During cold weather, the cold air would come through the old doors upstairs so I would close and lock the doors to keep them from blowing open. The locks were those old rectangular metal boxes that I had to lock with a key. In the morning I'd get up and they'd all be unlocked which was very odd because I would certainly have heard the key unlocking in them. It would happen all the time.

"In the kitchen I had a spice rack on the wall and at least a dozen times I'd go downstairs in the morning and the six spice bottles would be on the kitchen sink."

The Carman family purchased the home from the Reeds. Here, on May 17, 1973, the Mini-Mustang was foaled. When it reached full maturity it was 18.5 inches tall and weight 46 pounds, almost 30 inches shorter than a normal full-grown horse. Dale and Donna Carman were soon overrun by the curious, anxious to see what Donna named "Mini-Mustang." Its fame spread fast and far.

In June 1973, Mrs. Carman receive a telephone call from Pittsburgh, Pa. On the line was Col. Tom Parker, manager of Elvis Presley. He was asking questions about the pony when Presley broke into the conversation. It was agreed that Presley could visit the Carman home.

"He was very polite and he called me 'ma'am'," said Mrs. Carman about Presley's visit on June 22, 1973. "When he first got to the area from the airport his entourage made a mistake and turned onto Snider Road and stopped at the Alcon Factory (6522 Snider Rd.) for directions. Four limousines pulled into our driveway and Elvis got out and I went out to welcome them. They stood around the fence and looked at Mini-Mustang like anyone else. Elvis stayed about five minutes while we talked about the pony, but we wouldn't sell him. . . Elvis had on sunglasses and wore a cowboy hat and levis."

The house has had other famous visitors interested in Mini-Mustang - Lee Iacocca, who visited in 1973 and "ate baloney sandwiches in the kitchen," and Wayne Newton who visited in the summer of 1974 and stayed "for about 15 minutes to a half hour."

The Carmans had other visitors in the house. Unexpected and unexplained visitors.

"We called (the ghost) 'Esmerelda'. She was not malevolent," said Mrs. Carman who told the story of the three year-old child's death in the well. "People believe the child's mother is the restless, but caring ghost. My son was 16 at the time and had a downstairs bedroom. He said he saw someone pass through the room holding a candle and then walking upstairs.

"One time the next-door neighbor said he saw someone in the rocking chair in that room. I went into the room, no one was there, but the chair was still rocking. That happened quite often."

Through the years the ghost has come into that downstairs room

and tucked children in bed or come into the room and seemed to check on the children to be certain they were alright.

"I always considered our ghost, fun," said Mrs. Carman. "There was never any wrongdoing. My grandson told his teacher that one night a ghost came into his room and tucked him in bed. We had never told him about any ghost."

The motherly apparition of the Elvis Presley House is said to still be caring for the children who live in her former home. She lost her child, but her motherly instincts continue to warm the house.

MIAMIVILLE

After 142 Years Is Conway Still Awaiting Morgan's Raiders Return?

Miamiville is a quiet little village in Miami Township in the northwest corner of Clermont County. Not much is known to go on there today - except possibly on dark nights when trains can be heard using the rails that no longer exist. And seen with his lantern, walking along the old line, is the ghost of the Miamiville train fireman, Cornelius Conway.

The road bed of the Little Miami, Xenia, and Columbus Railroad, usually referred to as the Little Miami Railroad, is now a paved pathway for hikes on foot or wheel. There hasn't been a train pass through the Miamiville area in at least 20 years. This railroad transported Abraham Lincoln through Clermont County (Feb. 13, 1861) on his trip to his presidential inauguration in Washington, D. C.

Nevertheless, Cornelius Conway has been seen; always at night.

"I've lived here for 25 or 26 years and I've heard many people say they've seen who they call 'Railroad Bill' walking up the line with his lantern toward Lake Isabella," said Jim Poe, a Miami Township employee. The line is the present Little Miami Scenic Bike Trail. "The people say they see the (light of the) lantern and the figure of a man carrying it. Everyone I heard these stories from were very serious."

Conway's infrequent spectral walks of the line began shortly after he was killed on the morning of July 14, 1863. He was in the engine of a train traveling 40 miles-per-hour south to its destination of the Civil War Union training and convalescent camp at Camp Dennison. Some Confederate cavalrymen under the command of Gen. John Hunt Morgan piled crossties on the track that were wedged into a cattle guard. They cut the telegraph wires and hid in a cornfield about

one-half mile north of the wedged crossties. The train crashed into the obstacle and the front cars derailed and went down an embankment to the west of the track. Conway was killed. It was at a point known locally as "The Dangerous Curve" (heading south the path makes a curve to the east then almost immediately back to the west and then back to the east again). It is just over one-half mile northeast of the path's crossing of Beech Road. Ironically, Morgan used this same train line for his escape from the Ohio State Penitentiary in November that same year.

Another memorable incident occurred in 1905 when trains still frequently traveled over the track. One of the first incidents ever reported of the Miamiville Ghost, a young man was walking home along the track on a foggy night when he was startled when he noticed about 20 to 30 yards ahead, a figure holding a lantern. The boy told his father about the occurrence and the latter said it was the ghost of Cornelius Conway just warning travelers of the fog obstructing safe viewing distance ahead on the track.

Other people have noticed the phantom and his lantern in the edge of a tree line as he observes them, and when they approach the figure, it disappears.

People who fish at night have also reported seeing a misty figure holding a lantern and sometimes on foggy nights the figure is waving the lantern as if warning them of something.

During the summer of 1932 a late night passenger train out of Cincinnati was speeding through the area when the engineer suddenly noticed a man walking in the middle of the tracks with his back to the train. The engineer whistled a warning to the man and yet the man did not remove himself from the track and he was struck. The engineer threw the train to a quick stop and the engineers and the passengers began a search for the man along the track, but no one was discovered.

Clyde Dorn is a former professor at the University of Cincinnati and a Clermont countian. In 1980 he wrote a story about Cornelius Conway. "Right after the story appeared in the paper a man called me and swore he saw a train on the abandoned track. . . Kids around there camp during the warm weather to see the man. There were

rumors some of the kids have seen the man, too."

The trains are gone and the tracks are gone, but a loyal train employee remains on duty watching and waiting for the opportunity to warn modern day travelers of possible dangers ahead.

Incident(s) since the first printing:

There have been several individuals and groups who have contacted the author about their particular sightings. Most of reports are very similar. Usually there is a fog or an evening mist. A couple of people have claimed that they have actually seen someone carrying a lantern and as the eyewitness(es) near the lantern-carrying individual, the eerie figure disappears, either gradually or suddenly. The vast majority of the times only the light of the lantern is seen moving along the trail, but always it is just before a storm or, on a personal basis, an illness or a death pertaining to one of the eyewitnesses.

In 2000 a Clermont County Bicentennial Historical Marker was placed where Beech Road crosses the trail. It commemorates the trail, Morgan's Raid, and Conway. It has disappeared.

MILFORD

Who Is Prowling Promont After Dark?

Today, Promont is the museum and headquarters for the Milford Area Historical Society (MAHS). The mansion was completed in 1867 and at the time it was regarded as the finest house in Clermont County. It is located at 906 Main St., Milford.

From 1879-1906 it was the home of the 43rd governor of Ohio, John M. Pattison. Born near Owensville on June 13, 1847, he is the only Clermont County native to achieve the state's highest elected office.

Pattison's life is a story of numerous successes and achievements, but the last few months bordered on the mysterious.

Pattison's fatal illness may have been brought about by a strenuous campaign. His popularity was unquestioned; especially noted because he was the only Democrat to win on the state ticket in 1905. It is believed the end began when he gave his inaugural address on Jan 6, 1906, outside the statehouse in Columbus on a cold, rainy day. Gov. Pattison already appeared frail and worn. From that day he was ill throughout his entire, short term as governor.

It is believed Pattison sensed his approaching death. As he became weaker he said he felt that he could regain his strength if he left the governor's mansion and returned home. In April 1906 he left Columbus and was taken to Christ Hospital in Cincinnati. While there he continued to weaken and asked to be taken to Promont because he told those close to him he felt he was near death and wanted to die at home.

Pattison arrived at Promont in early June 1906 and with his family present he died in the mansion on June 18, 1906, five days after his 59th birthday. He was buried in the nearby Greenlawn Cemetery.

In the last few months of his life, Pattison almost seemed to be a seer of his very short future.

As a young man he loved Promont from the first moments after its construction was completed. He passed by Promont almost every day on his way to work in Cincinnati from his home in Owensville. Construction began in 1865 for William Megrue and it became known in its earliest days as "Megrue's Folly" because he lost money on its construction.

Pattison's father-in-law, a professor of Greek at Ohio Wesleyan, named the mansion a Greek word meaning "on top of the mountain." At the time there were very few homes in the area and the view from the tower gave a panorama of mostly farmland. The home had been built on top of ancient moundbuilder works.

It is believed Pattison died in the master bedroom on the second floor. It is in this room on the second floor and on the stairs to the first floor that most of the unusual activity takes place in Promont.

"I've heard footsteps when I was the only person in the house," said Carol Flum, MAHS President. "When I've been working on our newsletter I've heard footsteps on the stairs and I'd call out, but no one was there. I don't feel any evil here. I feel the ghost is curious and wants the house well-taken care of."

"We had been cleaning and were sitting in the old kitchen when the girl next to me asked why I grabbed her foot because I was the only one close enough to reach her," said Janet Fryman, an MAHS member. "I've always felt it was a good spirit. When we've been cleaning we'd see tobacco juice we'd have to clean up after we'd already cleaned that area."

"My cabinets have been opened in the gift shop and no one else had been in there and I felt this was very unusual," said Marge Henslee, gift shop chairperson at Promont. "This house has a lot of unusual creaks. I've thought I heard someone upstairs when I was in the house by myself. I felt creepy being in there by myself."

"At the end of the day, and I'm the last one in the house, I've closed the shutters in the master bedroom and when I'm the first one back in the house and I go to open the shutters they are already open and that's impossible," said Susan Cruse, the director of the Promont

Museum.

On a night-time stay, Andy Dickerson and Brett Frederick of Milford and Danny Woodley of Felicity toured the mansion with Mrs. Cruse.

"I saw the door open one inch and then close to its original position in the room Governor Pattison died in. I'd like to think it was a draft," said Dickerson.

"I had a strange feeling about the place. I felt like I was in another era," said Frederick. "There was a weird aura about the place. I felt uneasy enough that I just kept looking around."

"I felt like there was a presence in the room with me when I was in the main parlor on the first floor where Governor Pattison would probably have been laid out," said Woodley. "I couldn't wait to get out of there."

James B. Kirgan was the last private owner of Promont. He died there in July 1983 and left the house to the Milford Area Historical Society and it received the key to the house on Dec. 17, 1984. Leo Dickerson of Milford was his private nurse the last four months. "I had strange feelings about the house, but I loved the place. There is nothing I can really point to, but I definitely felt strange in some areas of the house." The historical society moved into Promont in January 1985 from its previous museum at 114 Main St.

John Pattison loved Promont from the first moments he viewed it on the hill. He very much desired to live there one day. One day he died there. It's obvious he is still there overseeing the caretaking of his beloved home.

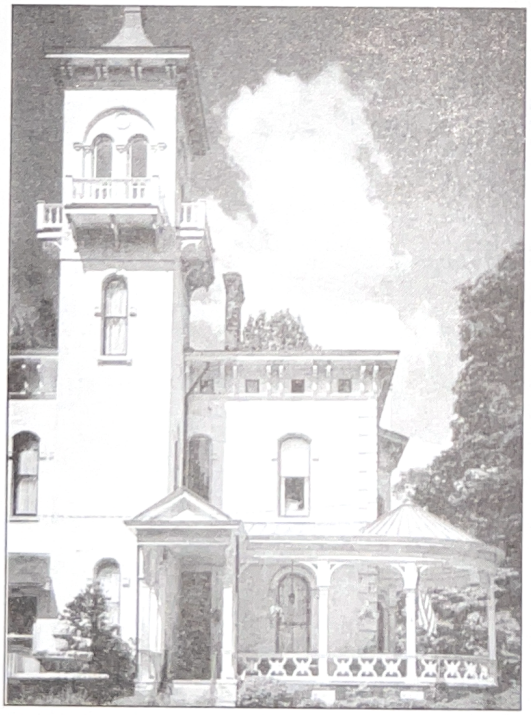
Incident(s) since the first printing:

Visitors who know nothing of the hauntings of the mansion have indicated to others that they feel uncomfortable in the parlor or in the master bedroom on the second floor.

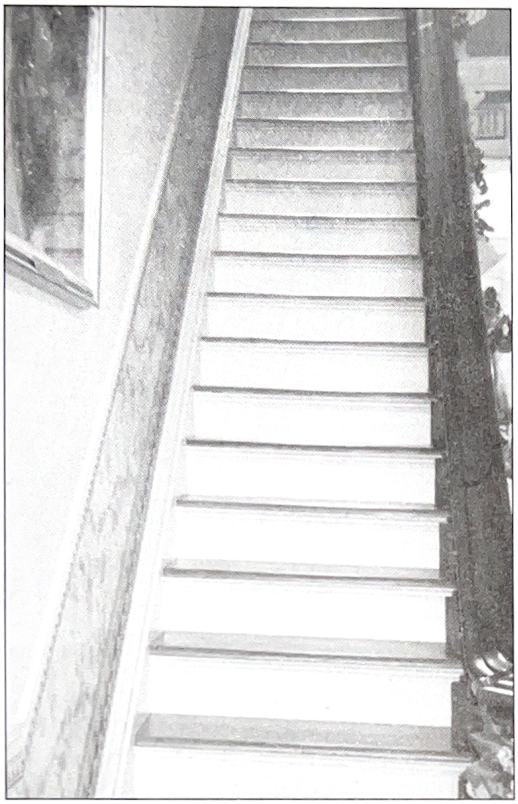
There is one particular incident that stands out. Publicly, docents deny any unusual goings on, but privately, they will whisper of some strange experiences. One night two of them were researching in the library that is located at the top of the main stairs. The ladies heard someone coming up the stairs after the museum had been closed. They called out and said Promont was closed for the day. Then they

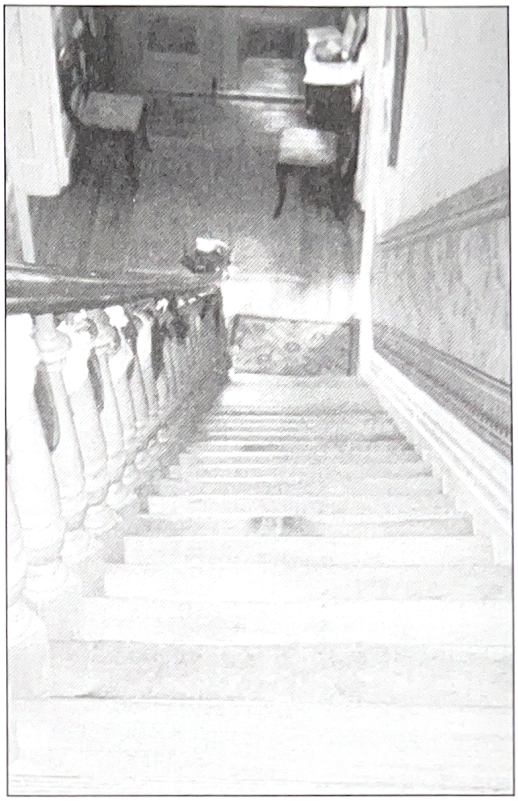
recalled they had locked the doors. They called out again and still they heard someone walking slowly up the stairs. They became somewhat alarmed. They decided that, together, they would look out onto the stairs. They looked, still heard the sounds, but no one was there! They very quickly exited by the back stairs.

It is believed that Ohio Governor John M. Pattison died in this upstairs bedroom at Promont. Sightings, sounds, and other incidents indicate the room is haunted.



Promont was built 1865-67. Several prominent people have died here, some of natural causes and some of suicide. Odd sights and sounds have been experienced throughout the mansion, including the tower.





The stairway from the library and the second floor to the entrance hall at Promont. Footsteps have been heard on these steps many times and no one could be seen who would be climbing up or down the stairs.

Photographer Karl Dappen permitted the author to place this photo in his book. It possibly depicts the deceased Gov. John M. Pattison and his wife once again meeting at the bottom of the stairs leading to the library and the second floor. Footsteps have been heard on the stairway at night and no one has been seen who would be making the steps.

MOSCOW

Are Lafayette And Others Still Gathering At The Spate House?

Moscow is an Ohio River town, a survivor of numerous floods. The river has brought tremendous devastation to the town and it has brought much good through the years. At one point in its 181-year history, it was a major steamboat builder and supplier and it also served as an entertainment stop for many steamboat passengers, including gamblers and card sharks.

The center of the gambling and card dealing in Moscow was the Spate House that is located overlooking the old steamboat landing. It was built in 1817, the second oldest house in town.

This beautiful mansion has hosted many notable people including the Marquis de Lafayette and Louis Philippe, the King of France in addition to John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay. The house also hosted many undesirables. Steamboats used to tie up on the old handlaid stone landing that extended in front of the Spate House. Before a terrible erosion problem, a stairway led from the landing to the house.

Upon entering the house, the guests were led to a wide stairway that began on a straight line from the front door. Once upstairs they were offered food and drink and entertainment, card playing and gambling. The entertainment would continue through much of the night. When the guests finally tired they could sleep on the floor or on tables once they were cleared. There was very limited bed space and those who used the beds were crowded crossways.

Some of the card players/gamblers were not very honest and were known for their cheating and slight of hand. At least three times, maybe more, gun play took over when someone was caught cheating or owed someone money. The killings took place on the upstairs floor. A many-times-told incident occurred one night when a man was

shot and killed. His body was secreted up the hill behind town and buried. The man was the master of a little red short-haired dog that would not quit barking. The dog was killed, put in a burlap bag, and thrown into the Ohio River.

Since that night, barking has been heard in the house when it is unoccupied. The late Gladys Duncan, a noted county artist and a historian, told the author of an incident that occurred in the mid-1970s. She was sitting by herself in the front living room of the house. She heard the sound of a dog barking upstairs. The sound came down the stairs, passed through the front door, and faded over the riverbank.

While she was researching for her book "Haunted Ohio II," author/publisher Chris Woodyard of Beavercreek, Ohio, visited the Spate House. While there she looked around the outside of the unoccupied house and did not notice anything particularly unusual.

However, on the drive home, her friend Rosi Mackey of Xenia, Ohio, asked, "What was the sort of dog of the Spate House?" Chris explained to her the story of the dog and Rosi commented, "Like that little red dog sniffing around the retaining wall as we drove away?" Chris said she hadn't seen any dog. To which Rosi replied, "Oh come on it was right there by the wall. It looked like a very close-cropped, red-haired poodle. I remember thinking I had never seen a poodle that color before." Chris had not mentioned the color of the dog at all.

Henry Cushard was the mayor of Moscow in the mid-1950s. He remembers one particular day when he was mayor. "The Ohio River was coming up and we were moving furniture out of the Spate House or taking things upstairs. There was a huge table we were trying to get through the kitchen door, but there was no way. One of the men helping went out to get some tools to remove the legs of the table and we went out with him. In the few minutes it took to get the tools and get back, the table had been moved into the next room with the legs still on! Larry Suter, who is dead now, said he was never going in the house again and as far as I know he never did."

In late October 1978, the author and friends Lynn Maloney and Mike McMullen of Amelia visited the house several times and the author recalled one particular night that cold spots followed the three of them through the house.

It was during the late '70s-early '80s that Bill Rengering was the realtor who found selling the house quite difficult because of the threats of floods and the rumors of hauntings. He told the author several times of incidents that took place when he was showing the house to prospective buyers. Two facts he made perfectly clear to the author, he would never stay long in the house by himself and he never showed the house after dark.

In late October 1986, Neil Batchler, Scott DeWeese, and Garrett Wood of Amelia and the author visited the house. The air in the village and along the river was calm until, behind the Spate House alone, a powerful wind suddenly hit that was so strong it bent some of the trees.

Also in October 1986, just after the before-mentioned incident, Andy Dickerson of Milford, along with the author, visited the Spivey family who lived in the house at the time. After introductions, Mrs. Spivey did not hesitate to tell what happened to her and her family in the house.

"The lights in the basement go off and on during the night like a strobe light and the television set will come on blaring loud in the middle of the night when no one is downstairs," she said while giving a tour of the house. She added that her large Alaskan Huskie dog had been acting very unusual since moving into the house. It slept during the day and roamed the steps in the central hallway at night snapping and barking at the unseen.

"It was a nice old house, but I got creeped out in the grandmother's room upstairs where she said she felt someone watching over her shoulder at night," said Dickerson. "She seemed very normal and said she just had to cope sharing the room with someone she couldn't see."

The haunting of the Spate House like most other hauntings is controversial. Many swear its haunted, some say it is not. Regardless, many prominent and well-educated people have heard the dog and felt the spirits. Why would a beautiful, historic home have trouble keeping live owners and occupants? It certainly has no trouble keeping its uneasy spirits sheltered, waiting for future unsuspecting occupants.

Incident(s) since the first printing:

In Summer 2000, a documentary was being filmed in Ohio titled "Around the World in Ohio" that included Moscow along with Athens, Sydney, Milan and Berlin. The author and Moscow citizens were being interviewed outside with village scenes being used for the background. When being interviewed about the history of the village and the surrounding area, the author was filmed with the Spate House and the Ohio River in the background. After about one or two minutes of taping, the film crew suddenly stopped the taping and interview. The cameraman and his assistants exhibited stunned facial expressions. They called the author and others there at the time to review what had been taped. In one of the upstairs windows of the unoccupied Spate House, a figure in white appeared not once, but several times.

In September 2001 the author visited with the current owner of the Spate House who lived there with her son who was of elementary school age. He asked her if any unusual occurrences had taken place since she had moved there and he wanted to make sure she was aware that the author's haunted tours included that the tourists would be allowed to leave the bus and look at the house, and walk to it but not interfere with her and her son's privacy. She said nothing unusual had happened in the house that would make her consider moving to another house. It was slightly chilly on this early fall day and the windows in the kitchen were closed. Yet, the curtains separating the remainder of the first floor were blowing up off the floor as if there was a strong breeze

The Spate House was the second home built in the village of Moscow. It was built in 1817.

passing through. There was also a frail little cat walking around the kitchen that had suddenly appeared in the house. It was missing an eye. After it suddenly appeared it would not stop rubbing up against the author's shoes and pants.

Several other times a faint barking was heard along the river bank and sounded as if it was fading down the hill and into the river. A couple of other times people were seen wearing colonial period clothing and one was leaning on a log split rail fence that did not exist.

The Spate house is to the right of the Fee Villa. The Fee Villa is one of the most important houses in Clermont County that was on the Underground Railroad.

NEW RICHMOND

How Many More Victims Will The Hook Man Claim On Pond Run Road?

The doctor and his wife lived on a hill that overlooked Pond Run Road which is west of the village of New Richmond. They had just one child, a son who was mentally disturbed. Rather than allow him to leave the house and possibly injure himself or someone else, his parents shackled the sometimes wild child inside his home. One dark, rainy night the house was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. The bodies of the adults were found. All that could be found of the young man, believed to be in his 20s, was a hand that is believed had been severed by a sharp object allowing him to escape the burning house.

Within a few years, teenagers began reporting hearing noises at night on the hill along Pond Run Road. Young kids would find empty cans and packages of food and, it was reported, thatched huts or hide-aways in the hills. Could this be attributed to the young man who escaped the fire?

Soon unexplained, mysterious noises began to be heard closer to the narrow, tree-lined, almost abandoned street.

Then the killings began on Pond Run Road! This road was being used as a lover's lane because of its seclusion. A young couple heard scratching noises outside their car. The young man told his date to remain in the car and not get out until he returned. The young woman fell asleep and did not awaken until she heard pounding on her car door. A police officer asked her to step out of the car and follow him and not look back at the car. After several steps she did turn and look behind her. She began screaming hysterically after seeing her date lying across the roof of the car with blood oozing from the many holes poked into his body!

Another young couple heard the sound of scratching outside their car, but knowing of the previous murder(s), they drove their car away immediately. When the couple got to the girl's home, the young man stepped out of the automobile and went to her door to politely open it for her. He jumped back and almost collapsed when he saw a hook stuck in the handle of the door!

Other incidents occurred and more teens were attacked. Those killed or injured were all stabbed with what seemed to be a sharp pointed object like an ice pick or a hook.

These and others were the stories I heard when I was cruising around that area in the late 1960s-early 1970s with my closest friends from my college years - Larry Colonel of Mount Pisgah and Chuck Kilgore of New Richmond.

Other teens and adults laughed and ridiculed and said they did not believe in this mysterious person, now being called "The Hook Man." But people who lived along the old road began to move to other homes somewhere away from this mysterious road. They claimed to have been disturbed by strange sounds in the night.

It was not until the late 1970s that people began to build new homes along the hills above the road. The new residents claim they don't believe in the legend, but why do they have powerful spotlights searching every inch of their property? Why have all the pullover parking spots been eliminated from the use of passionate teens? The old bridge where some of the lifeless bodies are said to have been found has been paved over forever ending all signs of struggle between the attacked and the attacker.

In Autumn 1991, Paul Dunaway of Goshen was driving a carload of friends on Pond Run Road and telling the tales of the Hook Man on the dark, lonely road. "The temperature dropped 30 degrees in seconds and the radio went nuts. When I turned off the road onto U. S. 52 and headed to New Richmond, a Greyhound bus seemed like it came out of nowhere with no headlights on and it seemed like it tried to rear end us. When it finally went around us none of us saw a driver!" All of the five passengers in the car that night were contacted and verified Dunaway's story, but they did not want their names mentioned.

A similar occurrence took place in Fall 1996. Steve West of Glen Este had just driven away from Pond Run Road and was talking with a carload of friends about The Hook Man Legend. On their "creepy" ride home on State Route 132 heading from New Richmond to Amelia, it happened again.

"I was driving home at night from Pond Run Road. Right after we left New Richmond a van followed us to Lindale with no lights on and it stayed right on our tail the whole way. It kept up with us when I speeded up. One of the guys with me, Joe Barkhurst, turned around a couple of times when oncoming car lights shined on the van. He didn't see anyone driving it! " Others in the vehicle who verified West were Jason Barkhurst, Jason Kreimer, and Jeremiah Larbes.

Neither of these stories has anything to do with The Hook Man, but it is extremely unusual that these kinds of reports are increasing year-by-year. Why is this happening to people who are traveling Pond Run Road?

To find out if the stories of the Hook Man are true just drive down Pond Run Road on a dark, or lonely, or rainy night and look into the woods for the glimmer of metal reflecting in the lights of your automobile. Do you see the ice pick or is it a hook?

Incident(s) since the first printing:

Occasionally there have been reports of automobile lights creating glints or catching the flash of something metallic among the trees along Pond Run Road. The flash is usually about three or four feet above the ground as if something is being held by someone. Could it possibly be a knife. . . or a pick of some sort? Some eyewitnesses imagine the flash is coming from a sharp pointed object.

The south entrance to Pond Run Road appears very evil and mysterious. Today it is still a dark, narrow, and foreboding country road.

OWENSVILLE

Someone Is Reappearing At The Village Hall

The Owensville Village Hall was built in 1859 as the Boston (the original name of Owensville) Methodist Episcopal Church. Any knowledge of what had previously been on the site is unknown, but it is believed that it was occupied by at least a couple of homes.

The most famous occurrence involving the old church took place about noon on July 14, 1863. Confederate States General John Hunt Morgan rode into town leading approximately 2,000 cavalrymen. They entered the quiet little village from the north on present State Route 132 and turned to ride east on U. S. 50.

The people of Boston were terrified. For several hours they had seen the large dust cloud caused by hundreds of horses gradually riding toward them. An old man, said to be a veteran of the War of 1812, entered the church and climbed the stairs to the second floor and then the stairs to the steeple that at the time was not covered with slats. He anxiously was awaiting the arrival of the enemy cavalry. He brought with him a double-barreled shotgun and a United States flag, the latter he mounted on the steeple of the roof.

As "Morgan's Raiders" turned onto Main Street (U. S. 50), he aimed his double-barreled shotgun and fired both rounds into the air as a warning to the Confederates. Morgan and his men were stunned at the open resistance from a single defender. He ordered some of his men into the church and about 10-12 of them rode their horses through the front double doors, dismounted, and climbed the steps to the second floor and the steeple. Once in the steeple, the rebels disarmed the old veteran. He was forced to ride with them to Williamsburg and the United States flag was tied to a horse's tail and dragged through the dusty streets.

Present Owensville Mayor John Mathews is familiar with the stories of the ghost of the town hall. He says many people have heard or seen who he calls "Nellie," but no one knows of her background or why she is there, but there is some speculation she may have lived in one of the homes that were located on the site of the town hall.

Walter and Shirley Shipley of Owensville have cleaned the building at night. "We've heard sounds of movement upstairs. My mom and I worked together some nights there, too, and we'd be locking up for the night and mom would ask me if someone else was in the building. We'd check everywhere and find no one," said Mrs. Shapely, a village councilperson and an officer of the Owensville/East Fork Rivers Citizens Historical Society,

One afternoon, Owensville Police Chief Tom Ellis took several photographs of the town hall from which to design a patch for the village employees. Something appeared in a few of the photographs that are believed to be of a woman looking out the upstairs window onto Main Street.

"We've had some of the employees say they've heard things in the building. Some of them didn't like to come in here at night by themselves," said Ellis.

Joey Deavers and Brian Willis of New Richmond spent the night in the town hall with the author in March 1997. They played cards and ate pizza while watching the NCAA Basketball Tournament on the television in the kitchen. They remained awake until 4 a. m. since they had been told most of the movement heard upstairs occurred from 2-4 a. m. Shortly after 4 a. m. they went into the first floor room and went to sleep. At almost exactly 6 a. m. they heard sounds of chairs moving in the kitchen. Within one minute they had rushed into the kitchen.

"I heard a noise in the kitchen that woke me," said Willis. "It sounded like someone was rummaging around. No one was there, but the chairs had been moved. Everything was still locked up like it was after the police had gone off duty at 3 a. m. . . I didn't tell anyone that I had heard something outside the restroom when I was in there earlier in the night. It sounded like someone was walking by and I looked and no one was there."

Nellie obviously likes to keep the building clean and tidy. She is regarded by those who have experienced her presence as the building's caretaker, or overseer. She has never posed any threat, but she has caused people to resign from their night jobs there. Who she was and how she died, no one knows. But it is a photographed fact. Nellie oversees the after dark activities of the Owensville Town Hall.

Incident(s) since the first printing:

Immediately after the first printing of "Uneasy Spirits," the author was interviewed by Southwest Ohio Magazine, a popular Clermont County cable television access channel. The filming of the Owensville Town Hall began just before dusk. The clouds were darker than usual because rain was in the area. The second floor windows were open to let in air on this humid evening. Twice the entire film crew, the author, and other interviewees went outside or to the first floor for filming. The first time was to the front of the building, outside. Everyone was there and hurrying, trying to beat the rain. It rained slightly and everyone went back inside and to the second floor where the windows were discovered to have been closed, but no one confessed to closing the windows. It had stopped raining and since it was hot upstairs the windows were reopened. The second time, everyone went to the first floor for inside filming. Everyone counted off and was accounted for. The group was on the first floor for less than 10 minutes. Upon the return to the second floor the windows were closed once again.

Pictures have been taken of strange mists or forms in the building, primarily on the second floor. One unusual photo was taken by the author when snapping still shots of a filming of Clermont County Hauntings by Cincinnati television station WKRC. On the red curtain behind Channel 12 newsman John Lomax appeared a strange, evil-looking face.

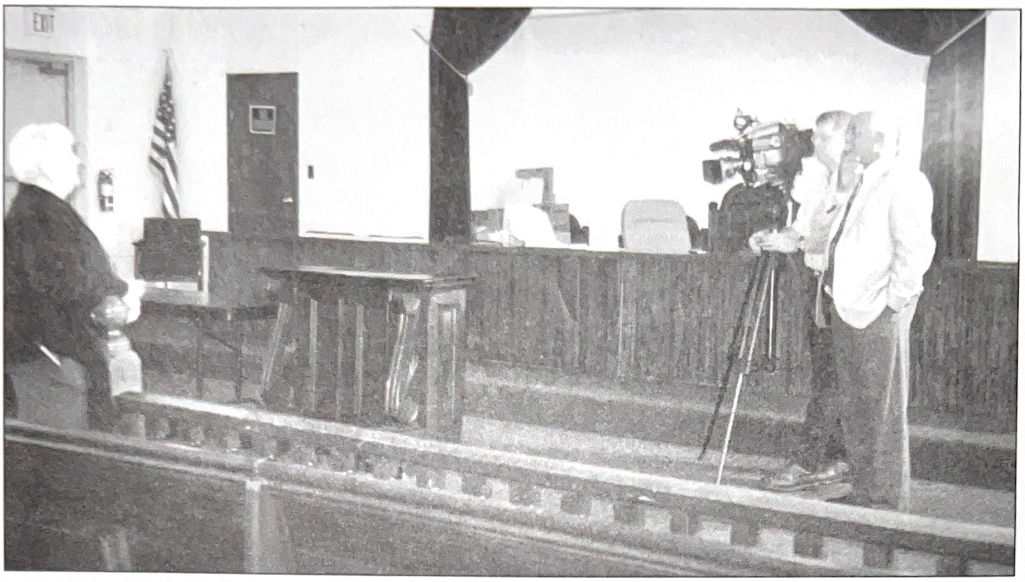
On a tour given by the author in 2001, he asked everyone to remain together in the village hall. When the group of about 60 people arrived on the second floor, unknown to the author, two young women sneaked away and climbed up to the steeple. It was then it was discovered they had left the group. Two loud screams were heard and then a lot of noise of tumbling and falling. The women reap-

peared stumbling and stuttering and displaying scrapes and abrasions. When they finally settled down they said they had seen someone suddenly appear immediately in front of them in the steeple and then disappeared.

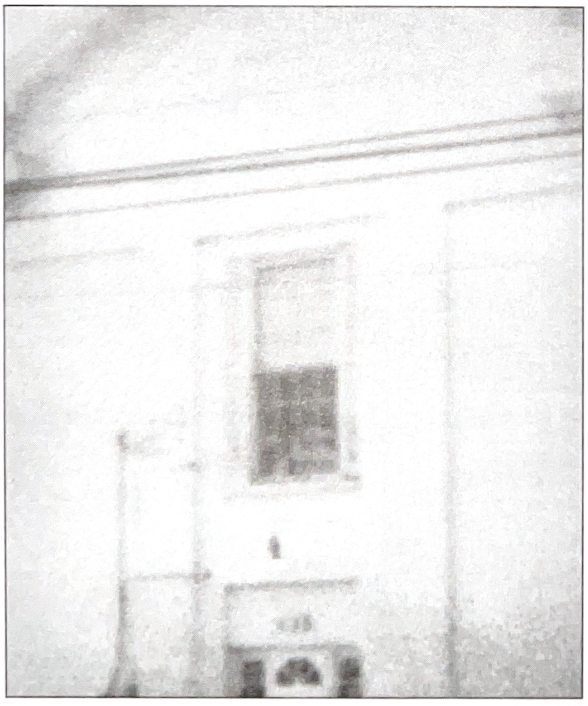
More recently, the author gave two tours in one day that were both sponsored by the Clermont County League of Women Voters. It was mid-October and the weather was a little cool, but not even chilly. Both times, and only at the village hall, did it snow. No flakes or wetness on any yard or street nearby or on the rest of the same tour route.

The Owensville Town Hall was built in 1859 as the Boston Methodist Episcopal Church.

As Clermont County Historian Richard Crawford speaks, orbs can be seen on the second floor of the Owensville Town Hall.



Shirley Shipley of Owensville is being interviewed in the Owensville Town Hall by John Lomax of Cincinnati television station WKRC. The interview was a portion of a series of Clermont County Hauntings being made by the station taking its ideas from the research and writings of Richard Crawford. Notice a mysterious mist behind Lomax and the cameraman. In color and up close, there is a face that peers out from the mist.



Visible from the upstairs window of the Owensville Town Hall is a woman who is believed to be "Nellie," known as the overseer and cleaning woman of the building. The photo of the woman wearing clothing described as being from late 1850s was taken by then Owensville Chief of Police Tom Ellis.

UTOPIA

Spiritualists Still Seeking Their Leader

Utopia is a very small Clermont County community on U. S. 52 at our border with Brown County.

In 1844, Judge Wade Loofborough of Washington Court House, Fayette County, Ohio, purchased 1,140 acres. Here, he and other followers of Frenchman Charles Fourier formed what was called "A Fourierite Association." They hoped to found a Utopia, a perfect society, a heaven on earth.

These people formed what today would be described as a communistic society - everyone worked and shared equally the type of living quarters, the amount of land farmed, the money earned; everything was shared on an equal basis.

In 1844, the Fourierites constructed a two-story brick building that had 30 rooms. Here, the entire community could live together. It was built not far from the Ohio River that at the time was less than one-third of a mile wide and most of the year was less than 8-10 feet deep.

By 1846 it had become apparent that the association was not going to succeed. The land was sold to John Otis Wattles, the leader of a spiritualistic community of approximately 100 people. They, too, tried farming and sharing everything equally. They took down the brick building and rebuilt it closer to the Ohio River. The new building was enlarged to three stories tall with a basement. The walls of the structure were constructed rather lightly and with many windows. The villagers hurried to complete the building. On the night of Dec. 13, 1847, about 8 p. m., a flash flood struck the building while a housewarming party was taking place. It is known not all the villagers were in the structure at this time. It is believed just six people survived the

collapse of the building. Thus ended the idea of a utopia in Clermont County.

Wattles' house remains one of only two surviving of the Utopian communities. It stands along U. S. 52 west of the present village. It is believed the second floor bedroom on the southwest corner of the house may have been the office of Wattles and may have been where the spiritualists held their ceremonies. The spiritualists believed that the deceased survive as spirits that can communicate with the living, usually through a medium. A medium was a person through whom the dead could speak to the living. It is believed that Wattles was the medium for his community.

People who have lived in this house report very similar experiences in this room. Individuals who are in the room said they go into what could be described as a state of drowsiness or daydreaming. They usually see six people approaching the house along a dirt road, going through a split rail fence and into the house and up the central stairway that leads to the room in which they are dreaming. Most remember hearing mumbling and crying and the people they see are in wet clothes. As they approach Wattles' meeting room they disappear as they round the corner at the top of the stairs or they fade into the room across the hall.

The weekend before Halloween 1991, the author and best friends Paul Dunaway of Goshen and Andy Dickerson of Milford, and Dickerson's brothers, Phil and Leo, were given a nighttime tour of the house by the man and woman who were the house's owners at the time. The lady of the house told her story of the upstairs room and added remembering seeing a lady in a blue dress wearing a blue bonnet, a man in Amish-type clothing, and a young boy, along with three other people she didn't remember enough about to be able to describe them. Her stories coincided with the other stories handed down through the years.

The hosts said their cat would never go upstairs and for us not to worry about being pestered by it. Up the stairs it went. Everyone entered an upstairs bedroom where the gentleman of the house said the overhead light would change colors at times. While everyone was in the room the brightness of the light pulsated and finally attained a

brightness that forced everyone to leave the room. They went into Wattles' office.

"The cat followed us into the room and it was never supposed to have gone in there before," said Dunaway. "It walked to the closet, raised its back and tail, and then bolted out of the room."

The cat had been chasing fur balls and imaginary objects the entire tour. It was watching the corner closet door that had been opening slowly. It suddenly stared into the very slowly widening opening and arched its back and straightened its tail and when the door quickly slammed shut it sprinted off and was not seen the rest of the night.

Tim and Jackie Conley now live in the house having moved there from Amelia. "All the buttons on the microwave have at times kept going on when I was getting ready for work. I couldn't turn it off and it made a lot of weird sounds," said Mrs. Conley. "Our son and daughter have seen shadows and one night when I was asleep it felt like someone was crushing me."

Mr. Conley has been skeptical, but he, too, has had some unusual experiences. "One night, out of the blue, the dome light in Jackie's car came on in the barn and we could see it from the house. We never saw anyone and the doors were still locked when I went out there to turn it off."

People who have lived in the house as far back as 1917 have all reported the same strange occurrences. Can it all be a coincidence? Isn't it amazing that a just recently discovered fact states six people survived the flood and all of the sightings of the apparitions are of six wet, distraught people? Are they returning to find solace from their spiritual leader or are they trying to find a way to finally break through to the other side to be reunited with their loved ones who have been resting peacefully since December 1847?

Incident(s) since the first printing.

Whew! So many!

To include a few:

People have moved from the house because they could not endure the strange occurrences any longer.

During a television taping, a little girl, under five years of age, explained that she had not allowed six people to enter her home one

recent night because their clothes were wet. She described a woman wearing a blue hat and dress, an old man wearing a white shirt with black suspenders and pants, a teenage boy, and three children.

A woman was struck in the stomach while standing at the entrance to the driveway of the house. She doubled over and fell on the ground in pain. Where she was hit, her clothes were wet and there was a large red mark on her stomach.

Cold spots have been bumped into many times. Football players from the University of Dayton asked to leave the site earlier than planned because of the number of cold spots they were encountering and they felt as if they were being crowded by the cold spots. People walking down the trail from the Spate House to the Ohio River have felt many cold spots and some have returned with their clothes wet after going less than half the quarter mile to the river. When the gate is open to the driveway a cold breeze, sometimes strong, many times passes through the opening and only there. And there are many photographs taken of orbs and of mists that are shaped like human beings.

The arch on the east side of the church built in Utopia in 1847 by the Spiritualists.

Members of one of Richard Crawford's "Haunted Tours of Historical Clermont County" walk the path in Utopia to the site of the house in which the Spiritualist community was almost completely wiped out by a flash flood of the Ohio River on Dec. 13, 1847. The six survivors of the tragedy are still seen sometimes at night walking the path back to the village. The leader of the walk to the river is at far left, noted Clermont County clairvoyant Eddie Fox. Notice the orbs.

A view of the western entrance into the Spiritualist church built in 1847.

A view from inside the Spiritualist church of the eastern archway. The building was constructed in 1847.

Richard Crawford has been a resident of Clermont County since March 18, 1955. Today he is the official historian for Clermont County, Ohio.

"A Haunted History of Clermont County, Ohio" continues his chronicle of the county, following his critically acclaimed "Thunder Before Dawn", "Lightning Across The River" and "U.S. Grant: Clermont County's Most Noted Son."

"A Haunted History of Clermont County, Ohio" contains 13 stories of hauntings and paranormal activity in Clermont County, some never before recorded.

Crawford began writing at 13 years old in 1964 as a sports writer for the "Clermont Courier." He began writing historical features for the "Courier" in 1975.

Crawford has received many awards for his writing. He earned Journalist of the Year honors with Cincinnati Suburban Press, United Methodist Church West Ohio Conference Historian of the Year and was a member of the first induction class into the Clermont County Sports Hall of Fame.

The youngest of nine sons of Theodore L. and Catherine Crawford and 14th of the 15 children, today he gives tours and lectures throughout Clermont County and the surrounding area.